

PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

Prepared for
Transportation Authority of Marin

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February 14, 2005

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TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY OF MARIN

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this preliminary report is to review the current organizational structure of the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) and outline some issues and recommendations concerning the agency's functions and staffing. Measure A, a transportation sales tax program approved by the voters of Marin County in November 2004, contains four major strategies to reduce congestion and improve access and mobility in Marin County. These strategies focus on improving and expanding existing systems and established TAM as the agency responsible for managing the program. A 16-member board comprised of all members of the Board of Supervisors and a council member from each incorporated city/town directs TAM. The board will hold a workshop on March 5, 2005, to discuss TAM organizational issues.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM)

- Administer a new transportation sales tax program
- Function as the county's Congestion Management Agency(CMA), programs state and federal discretionary funds and monitors project delivery
- Plan and implement programs to promote connection of land use and transportation decision making.

Countywide Planning Agency (CWPA)

- Work with the County of Marin to update the Countywide Plan
- Implement the countywide planning performance standards for traffic, housing, water and sewer facilities, and environmental protection as outlined in Appendix A of the JPA agreement of 1993
- Review and comment on major projects (a local general plan amendment, initiated by a private applicant or a public agency that generates an increase or a decrease of 100 pm peak vehicle trips or more.
- Additional responsibilities under discussion include coordination with local jurisdictions on joint planning issues; maintenance of countywide land use database; shared use of indicator based software that tracks land use, air and water quality, and energy; development of Highway 101 corridor specific plans; and coordination with water and sanitary districts.

Community Development Agency of Marin County

- Provide staff for the CPA mandated activities
- Provide land use information to update the traffic model and ensure congestion management conformity

Marin County Transit District (MCTD)

- Provide local transit service through agreements currently with Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District and Whistlestop Wheels
- Manage special transportation services (West Marin Stagecoach, Novato EZ Rider, Ride and Roll)
- Develop short range transit plan

GOALS OF TAM ORGANIZATION PLAN

- Avoid duplication of effort
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for agency personnel and for the public
- Provide cost effective delivery of services and projects through cooperation and collaboration, not expanded bureaucracy
- Determine TAM functions and staffing needs to guide budget development for 2005-2006

STAFFING SCENARIOS

The following scenarios are based on a review of similar functions in other transportation organizations, the author's professional experience in administering and reviewing the performance of transportation agencies, and ongoing consultations with county staff and board members. All of these scenarios are focused on the near term and assume that other agency functions in the county remain as they are today.

Scenario #1 – Current staffing

The Authority carries out its current functions with a total of three (3) full time equivalents (FTE's). There is a full time executive director and the planning functions and programming/forecasting functions are divided between two senior professionals, one planner (1/2 FTE) and one engineer (1/2 FTE). Technical support is provided by a transportation planner (1/4 FTE) and an associate engineer (3/4 FTE). The County of Marin provides personnel for TAM and, with the exception of the executive director position, jointly funds full time positions, with the remainder of the employee's time spent on county functions. Since the Measure A funding activity, strategic plan and land use programs like T-PLUS will be ramping up in the coming year, the current staffing level is not forecast to be sufficient for the next fiscal year.

Scenario #2

This scenario continues the current division of planning and programming/forecasting functions, but would add a new unit for finance and administration functions. The agency will need financial personnel to direct the preparation of the strategic plan, more complex budgets, audits, contracts and an accounting system to track funding allocations. This scenario would require a minimum of two (2) additional FTE's; one senior financial manager and one junior administrative position.

Scenario #3

This scenario assumes the same staffing level as the previous scenario (5FTE's), but with a different configuration. Instead of three different divisions, TAM could combine the planning, forecasting, and programming functions in one unit and place finance, funding, and administration in the other unit. This could reduce the number of senior staff needed and make a logical line of demarcation between the two units, with one focused on project development and the other on project implementation.

Scenario #4

This assumes the increase to 5FTE's in staffing, but would do away with organizational divisions or units and construct a very flat organization. This would mean that all personnel would report directly to the executive who would designate team leaders for special projects or functions, but no permanent hierarchy would be established. This scenario would work best if TAM were totally independent of the county, since productivity might suffer where employees are shared between two very different types of organizational structure.

SOME ISSUES AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL CHOICE

Financial

- Scale and nature of Marin program is different from other self help counties; smaller and more focused on maintenance activities.
- One percent cap means that the number of permanent administrative employees/functions for Measure A implementation will be limited (estimated \$160,000/year). This staff can be augmented by contract personnel where needed, but if permanent agency staff funding increases it will be because of higher revenue from sales tax than projected or

external funding for CMA, TFCA, TPLUS, RM2 and other related programs.

- Joint program funding of positions for CMA and Measure A functions is a productive method of utilizing technical and managerial personnel

Political/Institutional

- The political culture of the county relies heavily on cooperative initiatives.
- While the voter authorized TAM is different from the other initiatives carried out by JPA's or coordinating committees, the public may have a concern that creation of a new organization is duplicative.
- TAM can decide on a separate identity from the county; but TAM might continue to purchase services/share employees from the county.
- TAM will need to decide whether employees will continue to be county employees, a mixture, or totally independent.

SUMMARY

All of the above scenarios assume that the current roles and responsibilities carried out by other agencies in the county continue to be generally the same as today. However, there has been discussion by the board about opportunities for further collaboration, including the possibility that additional land use, environmental and transit functions could be transferred to TAM. Implementation of any of the above scenarios would not preclude pursuing these opportunities; but the first priority is to determine the staffing and organization for the currently mandated tasks.

I see the decision as a two-step process, with the first decisions needed for organization and staffing in the coming year. While the board pursues the executive director search, we can decide on immediate staffing needs and draft position descriptions. This information can be reviewed by the executive when she/he comes on board and recruitment for filling those positions can then proceed. The second step in the process is to explore the potential for expanded functions for TAM and develop the appropriate mission, goals, functions and staffing plan. I recommend that these second phase decisions be deferred until the permanent executive director is appointed.

Therefore, in the March 5 workshop, I propose that we focus on a discussion and decision on the above scenarios with the goal of insuring that appropriate staff is in place as soon after June 30, 2005, to begin Measure A program activity. After the workshop, I will prepare a final report with detailed staffing and budget recommendations for the selected scenario.

Some questions to guide our discussion on March 5 are:

- What are the changes that the public expects as a result of Measure A?
- What changes do we need to make to deliver on those expectations?
- What is the most cost effective and rational method of organizing the needed functions within existing or newly created agencies?
- What criteria will be used to determine a “best fit”?